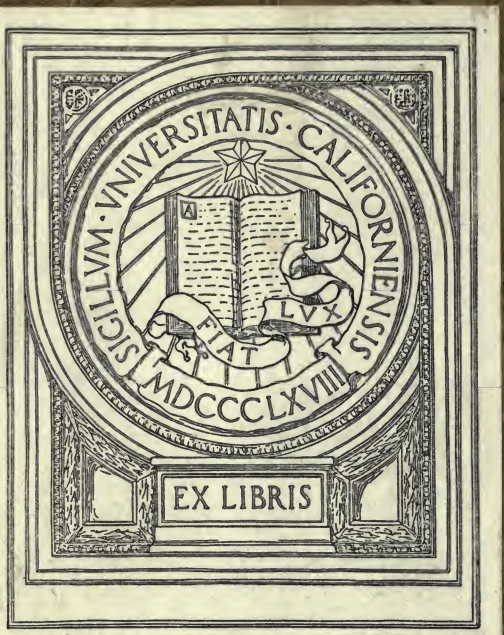
F
846
.H5

ner Winning of Nevada for Woman Suffrage



BANCROFT LIBRARY

THE WINNING OF NEVADA

FOR

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Including Oration of Hon. Curtis J. Hillyer, Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Nevada Legislature in 1869. An Unanswerable Argument for the Suffrage Cause.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright, 1916

Published by
THE NEVADA PRINTING COMPANY
Carson, Nevada

PRICE 10 CENTS

http://www.archive.org/details/winningofnevada00hillrich

THE WINNING OF NEVADA

FOR

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Including Oration of Hon. Curtis J. Hillyer, Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Nevada Legislature in 1869. An Unanswerable Argument for the Suffrage Cause.

Copyright, 1916

Published by
THE NEVADA PRINTING COMPANY
Carson, Nevada

PRICE 10 CENTS

F846
.H5

ANNE MARTIN GIFT

ANCROFT LIBRARY
37032

THE WINNING OF NEVADA
FOR
WOMAN SUFFRAGE

To secure to the women of Nevada the right to vote was a long and hard-fought contest and covered a period of forty-two years, but when achievement finally came it was with cyclonic force both in legislative phase and in the battle of ballots that followed, indicating what a wonderful change of sentiment had taken place in two generations' time. And, strange as it may seem, in the final days of the struggle, Nevada was known as a "wide-open" state, and much of its electorate consisted of those who, by reason of their vocation, were supposed to be against any measure giving women the voting power. But this element offered no concerted opposition; on the other hand, many individual members of the class were strongly in favor of granting to women the right to be placed on an equality with men.

But now that suffrage has come everybody, almost without exception, is pleased with it, and men who opposed it in the earlier days of the struggle now vie with the proponents in an endeavor to induce women to take a more prominent place in politics, even to accession to office, and no doubt this year's elections will witness many elective positions in Nevada occupied by women.

It was in the legislature of 1869, contemporaneous with the passage of a suffrage measure by the legis-

lature of Wyoming, that the question of equal suffrage was first presented to the people of Nevada, and it came in the shape of a resolution, introduced by Hon. Curtis J. Hillyer, in the assembly. It was first decried, disparaged and ridiculed, and when finally put to a vote it was "laid on the table." But a few days later it was resurrected through the efforts of Mr. Hillyer, and following an argument by him, delivered in the presence of the members of both houses, and which for oratory and presentation of facts has never been excelled, the resolution passed by a vote of 25 to 11. It then went to the senate and passed that body by a vote of 12 to 4. Passing through other formalities it went to the governor and the secretary of state.

At the next session of the legislature, 1871, no trace of the bill, which had been received by the governor two years before, could be found, and as the laws of Nevada require that all constitutional amendments shall be favorably passed upon by two consecutive legislatures and that no substitute for a signed and "lost" bill can avail, the measure died with this session. Whatever became of the signed resolution or who was responsible for "losing" it, are matters that have never been explained.

Further legislative action on suffrage remained quiescent until 1895, though the people of the state, however, had not lost interest in the question in the intervening years. They agitated it continually and this year—1895—they were strong enough to get it before the legislature and compel its passage, but the following legislature, which met in 1897, two years after, defeated it by a tie vote.

The next fourteen years saw a great agitation of the suffrage cause throughout the state, but it was not again made a legislative issue till 1911, when it passed the assembly by a vote of 31 to 13, and the senate by a vote of 16 to 2. Coming up again at the legislative session of 1913 it passed the assembly by a vote of 49 to 3, and the senate 19 to 3. Hon. Tasker L. Oddie, who was then governor, signed the resolution and transmitted it to Secretary of State Brodigan, who placed it on the ballot for ratification or rejection at the general elections of 1914. During the campaign, which covered a period of four months, many prominent anti-suffragists were brought to the state from all parts of the Union to talk against the measure, but despite their efforts, their eloquent and specious supplications that women did not want the right of suffrage, the measure passed by a vote of 10,936 to 7,258. At this election the highest vote cast was for the candidates for United States senator and the total was 21,567, indicating that considerably more than one-half of the men of the state who voted favored granting the right of suffrage to women, so it cannot be said that the measure "slipped" through.

In the various stages through which the suffrage agitation passed in Nevada between the years 1869 and 1911, it found supporters and was discussed from all angles by men and women who have gained distinction and honor in all walks of life. Many of them made national reputations in their calling. Among the number may be mentioned United States Senators Francis G. Newlands and Key Pittman, the late Dr. J. E. Stubbs, president of the University of Nevada; Hon. Frank H. Norcross, present Chief Justice of the

Supreme Court of Nevada; Mrs. C. B. Norcross, mother of Justice Norcross and one of the most brilliant women of the West, and Mrs. J. R. Williamson. The last two have passed to the Great Beyond—departed ere they saw the fruition of their hopes—but the thoughts and expressions which they left behind did much in creating sentiment for the cause which their lives had been devoted to. Mrs. Norcross was a writer of more than ordinary ability and from an article written by her and published in the Reno Gazette in December, 1897, we excerpt the following:

"The Creator never intended woman to take a subordinate place on this planet earth, for He gave to her the power to decide the physical and mental capacity of the human race in its pre-natal life. He endowed her with the truest, the most unselfish and the most enduring love the world has ever known for the purpose of caring for and guarding humanity's young life and helping to make good and useful laws for its protection all through its mortal existence * * *.

"The mothers of the world should have all the liberty that civilization can give, that they may develop every faculty of their being, that the world may have as royal a birthright as possible * * *. By dwarfing the mother mind and denying her equal rights in the government of nations the loss in physical and mental power and in better government has been enormous. This old belief in the divine right of kings to rule nations and the divine right of men to rule women is a relic of barbarism * * *. A house divided against itself cannot stand, neither can the nation, which is but a larger house, stand when it, likewise, is divided against itself. That there may be no division, men and

women together must make the laws under which both are to be governed. For one-half of the nation to make all the laws for the government of the whole can never be just to the other half."

In all the discussions, spoken and written, that have been made in favor of equal suffrage, it is not likely that any have covered the ground more thoroughly, more in detail, than did the address that was made by Hon. Curtis J. Hillyer before a joint session of the state legislature in Carson City in 1869. It was delivered at a time when the cause of woman suffrage was practically new and had been agitated only in small circles and communities. In no state in the union had it become an issue except in Nevada and Wyoming. When Mr. Hillyer presented the question to the Nevada legislature it was in the face of violent opposition, but given an opportunity to express his sentiments he made an argument that was practically invincible and to this day—forty-seven years later—has not and cannot be answered, and his conclusions are just as pertinent now as they were then.

Mr. Hillyer was a member of the legislature which he addressed, representing Storey County, of which Virginia City was and is now the county seat. He was a native of Ohio, born of revolutionary stock, and had had the advantages of splendid training and a liberal education. Attracted to Nevada directly after the Civil War, by the discoveries of gold and silver, he came to the Comstock, as Virginia City was then known, and engaged in the practice of law. His rise was phenomenal almost, and in two or three years he was known as one of the great thinkers and orators of the West. He remained in Nevada till the subsi-

dence of the Comstock boom, when he returned East, settling in Washington City, where he died a few years ago, respected and loved by all. His address, which, by legislative action, has become a part of the history of Nevada, follows:

The proposed amendment to the suffrage clause of the Constitution of the State of Nevada, striking the word "male" therefrom, being under consideration, Mr. Hillyer said:

Mr. Speaker: I propose to take this occasion to express my views upon this subject at such length as shall seem to me to be necessary, and as its importance shall seem to deserve.

I will say, in the outset, that I hope the discussion upon it will not be closed today. I am glad that it has commenced thus early, for I believe it is necessary for its proper consideration. And I hope that when that shall have been said upon it which members shall desire to day, we shall have further time for its discussion.

Sir, in a Republican government, there is no question which is so interesting as that of the suffrage. It is the base upon which the whole superstructure rests, and upon the quality of which depends its stability and its duration. Our fundamental constitution, the laws which are passed in pursuance of those constitutions, and the officers elected to execute those laws, are all dependent for their character upon the ballot. I presume, sir, that it does not need one word from me to any member on this floor—all of us the mere breath of the ballot—to induce him to give that attention to which it is entitled, to any discussion which involves the character and composition of the constituent body by whom that ballot is to be wielded.

The character of the amendment proposed would of itself arrest attention independent of the vital importance of the general subject.

The question as to the length of time which a limited number of foreigners should be compelled to reside in the United States before this privilege should be conferred upon them has

been sufficient to agitate the land throughout its length and breadth, and to form the basis of national political organizations.

The question of whether a still smaller fraction—less than one-tenth the number of the whole people—should have this privilege conferred upon them, has been the keynote of our politics for the past four years; has been sufficient to cloud the political horizon with the portents of the renewed civil war, only to be dispelled, and now, happily dispelled, by that quiet and all powerful voice which makes and unmakes constitutions and laws, and, thank God, presidents.

While I do not deem that the importance of these questions has been in any degree overrated, they are yet dwarfed into insignificance by the grander question which has now arisen upon this progressive Republic.

This question, which now confronts the American people is not whether a small number of foreigners shall be made happy by a vote, or whether rebels shall be made miserable by giving that vote to a still smaller number of native born Americans who have fought to sustain the government; but it is whether, by a simple constitutional declaration, the voting element of this state, and, by sequence of principle, of the United States, shall be doubled; whether the political voice of this state shall be uttered by 30,000 or by 15,000, and that of the nation by 12,000,000 instead of 6,000,000.

In the outset, I must be permitted to say that it seems to me that the burthen of argument is not upon those who maintain the right of women to vote. I think we are at liberty to rest until we have heard a statement from some gentleman of his reason why they should not vote. The women of our land are human beings. They are, I presume, intelligent human beings. Moreover, sir, they are citizens of the United States. They are subject in every respect to the laws of the United States. Their lives and their fortunes are held and secured under the conditions imposed by those laws. They are property owners, and their property rights are regulated by the same constitutional and statutory enactments, by the same broad principle of the common law which regulates the property rights of other

citizens. Their womanhood does not shield them from any of the burthens which are imposed by those laws. Neither the judicial tribunal which men have erected nor the tax gatherer whom they have appointed are respecters of sex in the performance of their official functions.

Now, sir, when I have thus described a large portion of our community, dwelling in our midst—American citizens, subject to our laws, bearing their proportions of the burdens imposed by the government—what is there lacking to the description of a qualified voter, according to the acceptance and received definitions of the American people? Have I not a right to rest upon this statement, and to demand why she is not as much a citizen for the purpose of suffrage as for other purposes—to demand to be shown some general principal of this government, some fact in its past experience, some maxim of its founders and defenders, to justify this visible inconsistency.

Sir, if I do, I am at a loss to know from what class of politicians I should attend the objection.

If it be made by a Republican, who professes to believe in the doctrine of universal suffrage as a natural right, he must tell me by what process of reasoning that system can justly be called universal which excludes from its operations one-half of the community.

If it be made by a Democrat, who professes to believe, par excellence, in a "white man's" government, I shall ask him to tell me by what right he excludes from participation in that government the fairest and whitest of its citizens.

If there be gentlemen who still cling to the tenets of native Americanism, I shall ask of them to explain how it is that they include in their ostracism, together with the foreigners to whom the genius of our institutions is supposed to be a strange, hundreds of thousands of native born who from the cradle to maturity have sucked in republican ideas with their every breath, and whose ears have never been polluted by the discordant tones of any other tongue than the Anglo Saxon.

If it be by a gentleman who thinks that property has a special claim to be represented in legislation, and that therefore its possession should be a qualification for the right of suf-

frage, he must explain by what process it is that the woman who owns her farm, her mine, or her residence, is not permitted that share in the government to which her property entitles her in the same manner as other citizens.

And if there be those—and I know there are many—who think that intelligence is the natural guardian of the suffrage, and that it should be made a qualification of the right to vote, I shall demand of them to tell me how it is that they are willing to permit the tens of thousands who scarcely reach the qualification of barely writing legibly their names and reading laboriously the constitution of the United States, and yet are willing to exclude the other tens of thousands of women who write our books and teach our schools.

Sir, I do not believe it will be possible for any member upon this floor to oppose the adoption of this amendment without encountering full in the face some proposition of which he has hitherto been the advocate, and which has been professedly the guide of his political action.

But I am not disposed to be technical about where lies the **onus probandi** of this argument. The advocates of this measure do not hesitate to assume the affirmative of the proposition, and to charge themselves with the demonstration that it is both just and expedient. We only ask that in the argument, fundamental propositions in regard to popular government, which have been everywhere recognized as true; general principles, which have had the sanction of all our principal statesmen; maxims which have never been heretofore controverted by any of our political organizations, shall not now, for the first time, be questioned—but shall here as elsewhere be received as true, and constitute the basis of the argument.

Among the maxims which form the creed of American republicanism there is none more venerable by its age, more deeply cherished, more axiomatic by reason of universal consent than this: That taxation and representation should go hand in hand. As an article of our political faith, it is fundamental. It is intimately interwoven with the birth and history of our government. It was the keystone of the arch of the American Revolution. "Taxation without representation is tyranny!" was the

cry which Otis and Adams and Quincy roused to resistance the Puritans of Massachusetts; and with the same cry Patrick Henry and Washington lashed into rebellion the loyal colonists of Virginia. All else would have been forgiven had this one demand been conceded. It was the essence of the contest. It was made sacred by the blood of a hundred battles. It was vindicated by the final triumph; and it has ever since been as indellibly graven upon the minds of the citizens of that Republic which was the fruit of the triumph as was the first commandment upon the tablet which Moses bore from the cloudy summit of Mount Sinai.

Now, sir, in behalf of the women of America I invoke the application of this doctrine; and I say that unless gentlemen see fit now, for the first time, to question its truth, the argument is complete with the simple ascertainment of whether or not the women of our land are taxed. Let the constitution of the United States, the constitution of our own state, the acts of congress, our own statutes, our judicial decisions, state and national, answer the question. They answer with common consent in the affirmative, and there is nothing left but for gentlemen to abjure the doctrine or else adopt the amendment which embodies it.

"Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

So says the Declaration of Independence; and so have echoed the American people for the past ninety years.

Are not the women of America governed within the meaning of the language of the Declaration? If we look into our own constitution, we shall find there some few exceptions based upon a distinction of sex; but we will find that those exceptions are, save in the single matter of bearing arms, not where there are duties to enjoin, but invariably where there are privileges to confer. We have passed many statutes this session imposing burdens, and I have yet to notice the first one of them in which this word "male," which we seek to drive from our constitution, has been deemed necessary to be inserted. In the laws with reference to the procedure in our courts, in our criminal statutes, in our revenue laws, the woman is legislated for equally with the man. She is, always and everywhere, one of the governed; and

yet, in direct opposition to the maxim which I have quoted, she is not allowed an opportunity to either consent or dissent from the laws by which she is governed. We, a body of men, have been willing to sit here this winter and make laws binding not merely on our male constituents who send us here, but a body equal to one-half of the community, who have had no voice in our election; who are, therefore, unrepresented upon this floor, and who are compelled to submit to whatever in the shape of statutes the present dominating male authorities may see fit to impose upon them.

In the days of the revolution this was called tyranny. The author of the Declaration of Independence so declared it to be in unmistakable terms, and I presume that it is still tyranny; tyranny meaner and more contemptible than that of which our fathers complained—for theirs, at least, was a tyranny of men over men, and this is that cheaper and more cowardly experiment of a tyranny of the physically strong over the physically weak.

Sir, I might go on until you and this House were weary enumerating the maxims and traditions handed down to us by our fathers, which are violated by this unjust exclusion. But I forbear for the reason that it is not here; it is not in the right, perfect as is that right, of women to vote, that I desire to rest this argument. I propose to go further, and say that, independent of all considerations of our duty, independent of all considerations of political consistency, simply and solely as a measure of political expediency, this amendment ought to be adopted. I advocate it less as a boon to woman than as a need to society and to man.

Sir, our suffrage system, upon which, as I have before said, rests the future of this Republic, is dangerously imperfect. There is not an intelligent patriot in the land who has not at times felt fear in his heart as he has witnessed the details of its operation. For the past ninety years the evil has been felt—the existence of the disease has been recognized and from time to time spasmodic efforts have been made for its cure. To this conviction, to this well grounded apprehension, are to be traced all those movements, of which I have heretofore spoken, for a

proper qualification, for an educational qualification, for a qualification by birth on the soil; and whatever of temporary success any one of these or of similar movements has had, it has owed to the fact that the fear which inspired it was well grounded, and they have failed because that the disease for which they were proposed as remedies was not understood.

Sir, what is the great evil of our suffrage system? It is not in our naturalization laws; for upon almost every important question the foreign element has been divided, and it has always been led and marshalled by the native born. It is not in the want of a property qualification; for it is notorious that our politics has been but too plastic material in the hands of property and capital. Neither is it alone or principally in the want of intelligence. The land is full of intelligence. Our literature with a century of age ranks that of the nations whose roots are in antiquity. Our daily journals are innumerable jets of intellect, keeping the whole land in a blaze of light. Intellectual talent crowds our deliberative assemblies, our congressional and legislative halls, and is only cramped for room for development. Few if any constitutions—few if any laws, are bad because of a lack of sufficient intelligence, either in the primary or representative body, to make them good.

Sir, I wish to be understood on this point. There is no man who can go beyond me in an earnest desire to secure, or in appreciating the importance of, a more thorough diffusion of intelligence among the voters of our land. But that which I do say is: That this alone is not sufficient; that it is not even, perhaps, the most important; that behind this want, behind all these alleged defects which I have mentioned, there is an evil more radical, more potential, more dangerous than all—and that may be summed up in one word: its immorality. The principal danger to republican government today is not in the perception or the reflection of its suffrage element, but in its sentiment and in its feeling.

Examine the actual workings of the system from the lowest grade of political organization up to the most august assemblage which consummates the national will. The primary of the political party, the election, county, state and national—who

does not dread their recurrence? Who does not sicken at the ever succeeding disgusting detail of their conduct and their management? The convention, the state legislature, the congress, even, of the United States—who that has rights to lose does not often fear their assemblage? When right and justice range themselves on the one side, and wrong, injustice and individual profit on the other, who can say that he does not tremble for the result? And why? Is it because it is feared that the electors may not comprehend the issues which are submitted to them; that they may be deceived in the character of the men proposed for position? Partially, perhaps; but not chiefly so. Is it because it is feared that the deliberative body will not understand sufficiently the nature of the questions which it may be called upon to decide? So far from this, that most frequently it is from those whose perceptions are keenest and quickest that the most danger is apprehended. No, sir, it is not the want of mental capacity to see the right, but the want of the will to do it when seen which today constitutes the weak point in popular government; which we must find the means to fortify or consent to see it fail.

The politics of the country is corrupt. Corruption in the primary; corruption in the election; corruption in the deliberative body; corruption by money; corruption by bargain and sale of position; corruption by all the avenues which lead to a supposed self-interest. And the fact that this thus exists is even less dangerous than the fact that it is tolerated—condemned, perhaps, by word, but practically recognized as a necessary and unavoidable concomitant of the system. Politics is a filthy pool. So says the press; so say the public orators; so says every man in the frankness of private conversation. And yet, so saying—so admitting its filthiness, they neither propose the means to cleanse it nor yet hesitate to bathe in it. Good men support bad men for office without compunction. Otherwise moral men witness the corruption of a primary or an election with no other apparent felling than of solicitude as to its success. Politics, the noblest science to which the faculties of man can be devoted, is thus degraded to the level of a game—a tricking, swindling game at that; and men play at it as if it were exempted from

the code of morality, and as if its very dishonesty was licensed. Sir, is not this dangerous? does it not menace not merely the welfare but the existence of our popular government? All thinking men will admit it.

Is it, then, irremediable? I am confident that it is not. But the remedy which reaches it must be radical. It cannot be done by teaching or preaching. Exhortation has been tried in vain. The press, the pulpit and the forum have thundered against it in vain; and their efforts will continue to be in vain, for the reason that they are warring against the natural—nay, the necessary, consequence of a defective and imperfect political system.

Sir, I believe that popular government is something more than one of several forms, which experience has shown to be the best adapted for the protection of society. However favorably its results may compare with those of other forms, I am unwilling to rest its claim for supremacy solely upon such comparison. I believe that it is the natural form of government; that it is good, because man is man—because human nature is as it is; that it is therefore theoretically the only true government, necessarily of superior excellence because alone responsive to the conditions of humanity. And, believing this, I believe that all other forms, monarchical, imperial, aristocratic, or mixed, must yield; and that popular government, that government which is the expression of the aggregated will of all the governed, must, by the inevitable laws of progress, become universal.

This belief, and the hope which this belief inspires, has the same foundation as our faith in human destiny. I know that if the world is to go forward, that its society is to advance instead of retrograde, it is because that there is in all of its aggregated elements more of good than of evil; because that if all of its passions, good and evil, its vices and its virtues, are allowed free combat, the victory will be with the right. To disbelieve this is to impeach Providence. And therefore, on like grounds, I am confident that there is no sure guarantee of political success except in making the government the representative of all the social elements. In other words, politics must be made a social institution. I repeat it, sir, as the central idea of all I think and all I have to say upon this subject; that which I would like

to see written at the head of every one of our journals; which I would like to see inscribed as the first line of every one of our political platforms: POLITICS MUST BE MADE A SOCIAL INSTITUTION. The intellect, the passions, the sentiments, which, in all of their diversity and in all of their completeness, characterize and actuate society, must be incorporated into and made to operate the political system; and then, and then alone, we shall have the same pledge of its excellence, of its continued advancement toward perfection, which now inspires the hope of the philanthropist that the world will not relapse into barbarism.

Entertaining these views I find the palpable cause the plain explanation of these admitted defects of our political system, in its incompleteness; in the lack of its natural constituent elements.

Its most glaring fault is, as we have seen, a gross immorality; and yet we have studiously excluded from that system the distinctively moral element of society. That which we most want is a political conscience; and we have carefully barred out from the political domain the distinctively conscientious social element. With the power given to us, with the material placed in our hands, by the God of Nature, to have given to this system a symmetrical form, we have undertaken to revise His decrees, we have rejected the proportions which He had fixed; and it is not strange that we have made it a deformed monster.

Sir, I shall not enter into any disquisition here to show that woman is by nature more moral, more conscientious than man. I appeal to the observation of each one who hears me; I appeal to the teachings of history in all time; I appeal to the received opinions of every age and every people; to the declarations of universal literature. He who contradicts it must contradict all these witnesses. In mind as in body, to man is given strength; to woman, beauty; to man force, to woman delicacy; to man grossness, to woman refinement. Let the father, the brother, the husband, say whether the feminine sentiments are not more virtuous, whether the feminine instincts are not more pure, than his own. The romancer who should write it otherwise would not be read; the actor who should dare to depict otherwise would be hissed from the stage; the poet who would sing it otherwise

would make discord in Nature's music; the painter who should venture to portray it otherwise would make art hideous.

To this truth we owe our civilization. Just in proportion as scope has been given to the nature of woman; just in proportion as the sphere of her action and influence has been enlarged, in any country, in any clime, communities, states and nations have mounted toward perfection. Her very presence is to vice and pollution, the east wind which blasts its growth; and wherever she goes, in her footsteps spring the roses of virtue and innocence. Woman is the great social purifier. Why should she not be the great political purifier? Politics is a filthy pool; and shall we let it fester and stagnate until the slime of its corruption becomes so offensive that even good men will shun its contact, or shall we cleanse it by pouring into it and through it a fresh and living stream of virtue? Shall we continue to live in and breathe the foul vapors of this political dungeon, or shall we open the portals and bid enter, with women, the sweet light and pure air?

Sir, as it is theoretically correct that there can be no true popular government without this element, so, practically, in the light of a sad experience, the great want of our political system is woman. We want her refinement; we want her taste; we want her sentiment; we want her conscience; we want her warm heart and her pure instinct. Let us have these, and the new political form which it will create will be to that of the present day what the church congregation is to the street mob; what the private parlor is to the drinking saloon; what the theater is to the melodeon; what the lecture room is to the cock-pit.

Is there any gentleman who will say that he does not believe that if women voted we should have better officers than are now elected to position? It is a shameful fact that morality is considered scarcely a proper, much less a necessary qualification for public life. There is not a gentleman in this room who cannot within the limits of his own observation, aye, within the political history of this yet young state, point to men who have been elevated to high positions, who, if women had had their voice, would never have been able to crowd their names beyond the threshold of a nominating convention.

We want her, not merely to give us better officers, but we want her distinctive feminine influence in our legislation. Woman is the educator of our children. Why should she not have a voice in the making of the laws which regulate their education? Who so well fitted as she to form, regulate, and foster the school system of a people? And who does not believe that if women had had the management, or even their share of the management, there would not have been today more than thirty thousand dollars in the school fund of the State of Nevada? She is a parent; and why is she excluded from a voice in the legislation which regulates the parental relations? She is a wife; and by what right or with what probability of justice is it that it is left to husbands alone to frame the laws of marriage and divorce? The whole of our system of public charities; the care of our orphans (and here I disclaim any wish to infringe on the peculiar prerogatives of my colleague from Storey, Mr. Welch), of the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the insane, and the poor, falls naturally within the domain of female guardianship. Our criminal statutes, which punish alike the woman with the man, should be made, without distinction of sex, by all of those who are subject to their pains and their penalties; and, believe me, they would be better today if in their making the tender heart of the woman tempered with mercy the rough justice of man. We need sometimes taste in our legislation, and I would like to ask of my friends, the delegation from Ormsby, if they would not prefer to leave to the women of this state to say whether we should sit here and legislate in this inconvenient, dingy, uncouth hall, or whether yonder plaza should be crowned by a stately edifice whose graceful architecture should make it a fitting temple for the beauty as well as the talent of the land.

I have now, sir, given some reasons, which to me seem to be of weight why this amendment should be adopted, and it only remains to notice some of the objections which are made.

First, it is said that woman is mentally inferior, and is thereby disqualified from exercising this privilege. Even if this were true, it would detract nothing from the weight of the argument which has been made. Intellect is not the sole qualification of a voter. It is doubtful even if it is the most important of those

qualifications. We want, as I have said, in our suffrage element, the whole of human nature. We want the sentiments as well as the perceptions; the heart that feels as well as the intellect that thinks. And, sir, as for me, I would prefer today to put the ballot into the hand of that woman the most illiterate of the land, whose conscience was quick and whose instincts were pure, than in that of the man profoundest in wisdom, brightest in talent, who never smiles over a cradle and never weeps over a tomb.

But this accusation of mental disqualification is a vile slander. I would ask no heavier punishment for the member on this floor who shall dare to make it, than to put the pen in the hand of some one of the thousand American women whom he traduces, that his ignorant vanity might receive from her the word lashing which it merits. Can the gentleman who makes this objection write as good a book of poems as Mrs. Hannah More? Can he give us as good a series of romances as Mrs. Southworth? Will he measure art and genius with Rachel? Will he attempt to compete in the field of literature with Madame De Stal, or Mrs. Sigourney, or with the hundreds of others whose articles fill our magazines and whose books crowd our libraries? Would he even like to submit to an examination upon the rudiments of elementary science before one of the ten thousand American school mistresses who today are training future legislators to express in proper English their contempt for their teachers? Sir, against this charge the women of America are abundantly able to defend themselves.

Then it is said—and this is the objection most often repeated—that in entering politics woman is passing out of her sphere. The remark is somewhat vague, and probably for that reason serves fully as well the purpose of the objector. If I am to hear it repeated on this floor, I shall at least ask of the gentleman who does so to define for us what is woman's sphere.

So far as I have heard it elaborated in private discussion, I should take their idea of woman's sphere to be something like this: If the woman be poor, it is her sphere to do the man's cooking, to mend the man's clothes, and to bear the man's children.

If she be rich, it is her sphere to dress elaborately, to shop

expensively, and to talk trifles voluminously. In the one case a slave; in the other a toy.

By what warrant does any gentleman thus attempt to fix the limit of the range of activity within which the capacity of any class of society is to be limited? By virtue of her descent from Adam, by virtue of her human nature, by virtue of her citizenship in a free Republic, she is entitled to do, and it is proper for her to do, all that which it pleases her to do; all that which her God-given faculties enable her to do, restricted only by those inexorable limits of right and wrong which restrain man equally with herself.

The idea of these gentlemen seems to be that a person's sphere is to continue to do that which they are chiefly engaged in doing at present. With equal logic might spheres be fixed to other classes of society upon this principle; and it might be said that the sphere of the Irishman was to build railroads, the sphere of the German to keep lager beer saloons, the sphere of the Yankee to peddle clocks, and the sphere of Governors to send veto messages to refractory and unprincipled Legislatures (merriment).

Sir, if this formula means anything, it is this: That there is something in the nature of woman incompatible with the exercise of this privilege. Let us examine it.

I know of but two conditions essential to the casting of a vote; one, the physical act of walking to the polls and depositing the ballot; the other, the previous preparation necessary to enable one to deposit it wisely.

Now as to the physical act: No gentleman who has retired fatigued with pleasure at 2 o'clock in the morning from a Carson ball will doubt that the ladies have the physical strength of limb which is necessary to enable them to walk to the polling places, situate however remotely within the limits of a township, and there deposit a ballot. And if it were a question of the convention, or the legislature, no gentleman, unless he believes that entering into public life will impair the voice, will doubt their physical capacity to say yea and nay, and very much more, either in a deliberative body or anywhere else. That difficulty therefore is not in the way. She is by nature physically fitted to do

these acts. The disqualification then, is for the mental operation. To cast a vote wisely it is necessary that she should examine, weigh, and decide the question of policy on which she is called to act; and if this is unfeminine, then the objection is good.

It is admitted, I believe, that it is not unfeminine for women to read, to think, to study, and even to discuss. Why then unfeminine for them to read, think upon, study, and discuss political subjects? The science of human government, the highest and noblest as it is the most complex and difficult of all sciences, what is there in its character to offend the delicacy, to taint the refinement, or to debauch the morals of a woman?

Sir, politics has not been in the past by any means a distinctively male institution. Where shall we find more world renowned politicians—aye, more eminent statesman, than Elizabeth of England, Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Isabella of Spain? And yet I have never heard that any one of those distinguished sovereigns sacrificed to success in public life any of their womanly qualities. In the reign of Louis XV and Louis XVI, it is notorious that the women of France controlled its politics; and yet, if we are to believe the court history of its times, they did not thereby lose any of their feminine attractions. The virgin queen who ruled England with a singleness of will which no other monarch before or after her has dared to dsiplay, at whose word Europe trembled, was no less the high-born lady in the drawing-room of the palace; no less the tender-hearted woman when receiving with haughty carriage, but heaving bosom, the homage, half of a subject, half of a lover, of the knightly Hastings. Her successor, the present monarch of England, does not hesitate to enter Parliament and address, on the gravest political subjects, the lords and gentlemen of her realm. And yet she will go down to history—she will live in the hearts of the English people, less as a queen, than as a model wife and mother. Sir, we have in our own time in our own country, an example more illustrious still. Next to William H. Seward, the most far-seeing political philosopher of this age; next to Abraham Lincoln, the great administrator in whose sympathetic nature the Nation seemed to unfold and develop itself, the person who has exercised the largest influence in the grand political revolution of

the past fifteen years, by which slavery, that living lie upon popular government, has been blotted out from the list of American institutions, is a woman. With her pen in hand in her study at Cincinnati, surrounded by the family circle which she adorned, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe told the story of Uncle Tom, of Eva, of Legree and Sinclair; and as it went to every corner of the Nation, as it was perused and pondered over by every fireside, as the indignation mounted, the cheek flushed or the tear fell from each individual of ten thousand theatrical audiences who witness its representation in dramatic form upon the stage, a million prejudices were loosened, a million hearts were touched with conviction, and the eyes of the Nation were open to see, and their consciences to accept, the great political truth which involved the destiny of the Republic. Gentlemen may sneer at this woman politician; they may call her strong minded—an accusation which they may be very sure she will never make against them in return; they may pompously declare her to have been out of her sphere; they may arrogantly deny her the vote which they give to thousands too ignorant to read her book; but as for me, I feel that I would be honored to go before her on my bended knees and be permitted to kiss the hem of her robe in grateful reverence for her genius and her service to my country.

Bancroft Libr

It is next objected that woman will be contaminated by politics. I hope I have been able to show that if this is true it has no natural cause; that this effect does not flow from anything either in the nature of woman or in the nature of political questions. It is therefore, if true at all, accidental and superficial. The objector points to our primaries, to our conventions, to our street political gatherings, to our elections, and triumphantly asks: "Are these fit scenes for female participation?" Sir, I admit that they are not. No man shall go beyond me in characterizing and execrating these disgusting scenes which annually disgrace the community, the state and the nation. And if the political field is always to remain the dirtiest slough of vulgarity and immorality which it now is, then I agree that it neither is nor ever will be fit for the presence of woman. I will go farther: It neither is nor ever will be fit for the presence of respectable men. The difference between these gentlemen and my-

self is, that they accept this condition of things as irremediable. They are willing to continue to wallow in this filthy slough. I propose to give it a carpet of green herbage and flowers, so that neither gentleman nor lady may fear to set their foot upon it.

The real question upon this point is: Will women lift up politics, or will politics drag down women? They profess to fear, and I believe they do fear, that woman will be made a victim. I hail her as a savior. And upon this issue I appeal to the record of experience. I shall not attempt to descend into details at this stage of the discussion, but I will content myself with this broad assertion: That wherever, in any age or country, among any people, the sphere of female influence and action has been enlarged—wherever virtuous woman has been permitted to enter into any new walk of life, whether in the domain of business or of amusement, of religion, of art, or of science, her womanly nature has not been modified,—her distinctively feminine qualities have not been impaired by the new conditions into which she has been introduced; but on the contrary, she has been the agent, she has always been the moving power, by which those conditions have been elevated to the level of her womanhood. I defy gentlemen upon this floor to point to the exception; and until the exception is found—nay, until they are sufficiently numerous to control the general rule, I have a right to say logically that as it has been in the past so it will be in the future, as it has been with other subjects so it will be with politics; its grossness and immorality will not stain her pure vestments, but like the virgin snow on yonder mountain, the mantle of her womanhood will cover up its uncouth features and bury from view its ugly deformity.

Sir, I have an ideal of an election day in which woman should take a part. The morning sun which rose upon it would not shine upon barricades erected in every ward of our cities and towns. An army of special policemen would not be stationed at every corner of our streets. The good citizen, as he left his home, would not feel it necessary, for the first time in the year, to bind his pistol to his waist. Each of the polling places would not be surrounded by a howling mob. The voter who desires to

exercise his privilege would not be compelled to run a gauntlet; to be stared at by lines of brutal menacing faces; to have his ears insulted by the clink of the circulating medium which affects the exchange between an elector's vote and his so-called political principles. and every finer feeling of nature outraged by the coarse vulgarity of that vile horde of human vermin who seem to spawn on every election day, as if there were something in its very atmosphere fitted to vitalize and warm them into life.

No, sir. The day of which I am speaking should in its general features be a mixture of the national holiday and the Sabbath of rest; a day wearing the external apparel fitted for one on which an agreeable privilege was to be exercised as well as a solemn duty to be performed. It should be ushered in by the peal of bells from every tower and steeple—the streets should don their gayest attire, and the air be sonorous with swelling notes of the national anthem. Over each of the polling places should float the national emblem, and the steps which lead up to the portals through which the votes were to be received should be as broad, as free of access, and as inviting as are those which now lead to the entrances of our theaters and our churches. Thither should flock not a mob, but society. Thither the young man, just turned his majority, should conduct the mother who from his infancy had trained as well his political ideas as his moral sentiments. Thither the husband should conduct his wife, proud of her independence and her equality. Thither the maiden should be led by her lover—the loving bond between them tied more tightly by the consecrating thought that they were together performing a responsible duty. There would be discussion, but no brawls—for gallantry is instinctive in the American breast, and, whatever may be his condition in life, in the presence of a lady he is a gentleman. She would pass without insult or annoyance to and from the polls as she now passes without insult or annoyance through our streets where she daily comes in contact with every class and element which she would encounter in the performance of this duty. In the atmosphere of refinement with which woman's presence would surround the circumstances of the day, the shameless vulgarity, the brazen corruption, which now claim it as their carnival, could not live at her

approach, and their votaries would slink away as beasts of prey skulk to their lairs before the morning light; and when the sun went down it would set upon a state, a nation, rejoicing in the certainty of the triumph of the right, because the decision pronounced would have been the utterance of a universal humanity. Who, sir, would not pray for the dawn of an election day resembling this?

Lastly, sir, it is said that woman does not want to vote. To speak more correctly it should be said that some women do not want to vote. And if there be one who desires to exercise this privilege, what right has man, what right has a sister woman, to object to its exercise?

But this is no proposition to compel woman to vote. There is nothing in the amendment proposed which forces upon any woman the exercise of this privilege. It simply proposes to make her a free agent; that which she is not at present. Is it possible that before a Republican audience I have still to expose the fallacy of the stale Democratic argument that when liberty of personal action is given it necessarily follows that all sorts of actions will be performed without reference to their justness or propriety? Have I again to refute the miserable proposition howled for the past four years from every Democratic stump that unless there were constitutions and statutes interdicting the intermixtures of races and colors, all the ladies in the land would engage in indiscriminate miscegination? Sir, I hope we have had enough of that kind of argument. Political freedom does not constrain to do any act which is either wrong, indecent, or revolting to the taste. That man insults the sex who says that it is necessary that woman should be restrained by constitutional inhibition to prevent her from violating her womanly nature and from unsexing herself. That woman should be ashamed of herself who would tolerate in her presence the assertion, that if we should remove this constitutional prohibition, and leave her free as we are free—free to exercise or to refrain from exercising this privilge—free as to the extent, the time and manner of its exercise—she would exercise it any otherwise than as the circumstances by which she was surrounded, her relations to other

persons and other duties, her own good judgment, her refined and feminine taste, would permit and dictate to her to do.

But I am inclined to think the fact in relation to the wishes of our women on this subject, is much misrepresented. They are very chary of their expressions, for they are under bondage to the opinion of their fathers, husbands, and brothers, who constitute at present their guardians of mind as well as of body. Sir, if she has this alleged repugnance, it is a false idea; and for her sake, as well as ours, I hope it will speedily be abandoned. I wish my voice were loud enough to reach the ear of every woman, particularly of every wife in the land, that I might tell her that to a delusive prejudice, miscalled delicacy, she is sacrificing the highest realization of her womanhood. I would bid her to cease to be the petted toy, the flattered idol of her husband, and to become his partner and associate; to cease to be satisfied with being the consolation of an idle hour, and aspire to become the partaker of those earnest thoughts and actions which constitute his real life—to share his joys and sorrows, not by a smile or a tear, but by comprehending and becoming a part of them. I would tell her that there is no love, no admiration, like the love and admiration which equal bestows on equal; that her highest happiness is in the exhaustion of all her capacities; that the most solid joys come not except with the acceptance of the highest responsibilities. And I would bid her, as she aspires to the full development of her womanly nature, to break down this barrier to enter this field of earnest thought and action, to pass fearlessly with man into this broad and stirring domain of practical human government, to fight with him its stormy battles, to share with him its intoxicating triumphs, and thus crowning her beauty with usefulness, her purity with wisdom, to be worshipped by a man no longer as an idol, but as an angel.

Now, sir, a few words and I am done; and those words shall be of advice to my friends who surround me.

To my Democratic friends I would say: You ought without hesitation to accept this proposition, for it is novel, and your great political want is something new. It has a tendency, however remote, to break up present political parties; and your most pressing necessity, if you wish to count for anything in politics,

is that present political parties should be broken up. You have been a long time excluded from the flesh pots. You have trod for many weary years the thorny, tedious, barren path of a hopeless minority. You will continue to tread it just as long as the present issues which now divide Republicans and Democrats shall constitute the basis of political organization. You are in the dungeon of despair. Here is opened a door of escape; a hope—nay, I may say, I think, a certainty, of indulging in that long untasted luxury: Success. Abandon the African whom you say you do not like and accept the woman against whom, I am sure, none of your tastes revolt. Forsake those ancient relics, your devotion to which has ruined you, and accept an article of modern manufacture which has the merit of utility. Come up out of the valley of dry bones and enter the field where men live and act. Cut loose from your dead issues—those putrid corpses to which you have been bound for the past ten years, and accept the embrace of a vital, living form, and I promise you, in addition to that greatest of all Democratic blessings, political power, that other boon, which you ought most to crave from the American people—forgetfulness of the past.

To my Republican friends I say: Look to your laurels. They are green and fresh, and magnificently abundant, but they may wither and fade, and your brow yet go uncrowned, unless fresh garlands are gathered. With us the past at least is secure. I would not barter for the highest political preferment which this nation can bestow, the satisfaction of the thought that I have a part, however insignificant—that I share, however humbly, the rich glories which cluster around the history of our yet youthful party. But we must remember that we have succeeded, not because we were the Republican party, but because we were right. We have won because, in a progressive age, we have been the party of progress; because when the Nation was marching we have marched in the van; because we had the courage to pluck out, from the overwhelming mass of prejudice in which it was buried, a principle of eternal truth—dared boldly to inscribe it on our banners and to march to battle with the watchword of universal freedom.

Remember Lot's wife, and look not back. Beware of a halt.

If we stop, the world, the nation, will not stop. The inexorable law of progress will not modify itself to suit our movements; it will not stay its operation through respect either for our party name or our past achievements, but will as relentlessly consign us to defeat and oblivion as it has for the same cause there consigned our Democratic predecessors.

Here is the great question of the hour. I beseech you to lay aside your prejudices for its consideration. Be not appalled either by its novelty or its magnitude. Let your intellects weigh it; let your sentiments appreciate it; let your reason judge it; and if you find it to be, as I believe you will find it to be, right, then spring again to the call; nerve yourselves for a new advance; gird your loins to scale another height; write another great truth on your banner; let the thrilling cry of "Onward" ring again through your ranks, and plant another bright star in the already growing firmament where shine your past triumphs.

If you fail, if you have found already a resting place, those of us whose judgment and conscience bid us still to go forward will be compelled, sorrowfully and tearfully, but still compelled to say farewell, and grieved at your desertion; but confident of ultimate success, we will bide our time.

(At the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Hillyer was greeted with round after round of applause.)

Stockton, Calif.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908